Macintosh VS Windows 95

#15 Infrared Networking

Summary

Apple's newly announced Macintosh® PowerBook® 5300 portable computers include infrared communication ports that not only let portable computer users share data, but also let the PowerBook tie directly into a local area network, without any cables. This sort of networking without wires is far ahead of what users can do with standard PCs running Windows 95.

This is part of a series of short reports on the contrasts between a Macintosh computer and a PC with Windows 95. To see previous entries in the series, visit us on the Internet at http://www.apple.com/whymac/

The Macintosh Advantage

The PowerBook 5300 portable computers feature 100- and 117-MHz PowerPC™ 603e RISC processors, bringing RISC performance to mainstream portable computers for the first time. That means the new PowerBook computers are ready to run Apple's new RISC-based software environments, including QuickDraw™ 3D. But one of the most exciting features of the new PowerBook computers is their infrared networking capabilities.

Using their built-in infrared (IR) transceivers, the PowerBook 5300 models can share files with each other without cumbersome set-up procedures or complex directory searches. When two or more IR equipped PowerBook computers are placed within range of each other, they automatically recognize each other and create guest folders on each desktop, enabling their users to share files by clicking and dragging.

By comparison, Windows-based IR applications require you to use the directory to make file connections, and you can only make one connection vs. multiple connections on Macintosh systems.

The infrared connector can also be used to hook into an AppleTalk® local area network. All users need is Farallon Computing's AirDock, an inexpensive infrared receiver adapter that connects to the user's desktop computer and its associated networking software. This lets users access servers and printers, send e-mail, check their calendars and do anything else they would normally do with the network, with full LocalTalk® speed (230.4 kbs). It's plug and play networking without the plug.

The computers also come bundled with Callisto Corporation's Super Maze Wars, a network-aware battle game that can also be played over the infrared network.

The new PowerBook 5300 computers range in price from U.S. $2,200 to U.S. $6,799, depending on configuration and screen technology.*

What It Means For Users

The new PowerBooks make it easier for people to work together. Users in a meeting can exchange files and even share applications. And the infrared networking gives a user many of the benefits of docking the computer, without the need for a docking station. We'll leave it to others to consider the implications of wireless Maze Wars for long airplane flights.

What About the Future?

Apple's infrared hardware is compliant with the IrDA infrared standard and Apple is working on an IrDA-compliant software implementation for the future.

Questions or Comments?

You can send e-mail to the Macintosh Platform Marketing team at competition@applelink.apple.com.

*These are anticipated US prices. Apple does not control the pricing charged by resellers. Your price may vary.